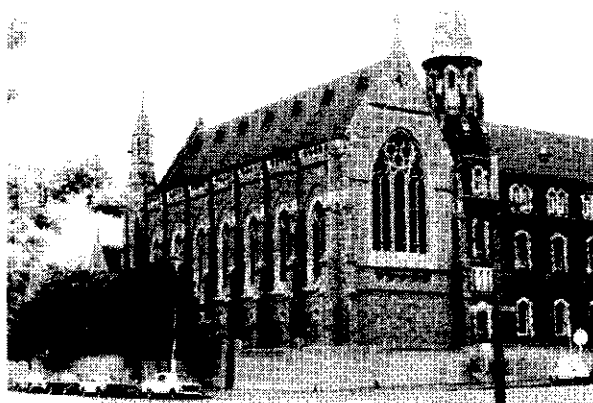


BUILDING ANALYSIS AND EVIDENCE (cont'd)

An internal inspection was not possible but a view of the hall showed a grand double arched entrance hall with intact cornices and skirtings. The front room, viewed through the window, appears to have intact cedar panelling and joinery. An internal inspection and analysis is recommended.

This building provides a superb example of an elaborate three storey terrace house, constructed in various stages. The ornate facade is intact with a large and elaborate parapet, and the verandah is of considerable interest with the unusual timber joinery. The building is considered of great significance on a state-wide basis, and provides an important and elaborate element to the Nicholson Street precinct.

NAME: Convent of Mercy Chapel
ADDRESS: Nicholson Street
(corner Palmer Street)
CONSTRUCTION DATE: 1887-1890
ALTERATNS./ADDITNS: -
ARCHITECT: Reed, Henderson & Smart
BUILDER: Martin and Peacock
FIRST OWNER: Catholic Church
FIRST OCC./USE: Ditto/Chapel
PRESENT OWNER Ditto
PRESENT OCC./USE: Ditto/Chapel
CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS: Bluestone foundations, freestone, Wairn Ponds Stone dressings, slate roof.
INTACTNESS/CONDITION: Intact
AREA/STREETScape: Part of recommended area A1.



IMPORTANCE AND BACKGROUND:

This chapel was constructed for the Convent of Mercy in 1887-1890 to the design of architects Reed, Henderson and Smart and built by contractors Martin and Peacock.¹ The foundation stone was laid on the 23rd October 1887².

The chapel survives in excellent condition and is externally intact, as described in 1890:

"the body of the chapel is 80ft long by 27ft wide, while the heights are 37ft to the cornice and 48ft to the apex of the vaulted wooden roof. The length is divided into seven bays strengthened by massive buttresses and surmounted by a perforated stone parapet. The north-west angle terminates with a bell turret whilst the south gable is flanked by a tower which is capable of holding a peal of bells..."

1. Australasian Builder & Contractors News 5.7.1890 p.1174.
2. Ko, K. and Wu F. "Convent of Mercy - Academy of Mary Immaculate, Nicholson Street, Fitzroy" B. Arch, University of Melbourne 1968.

Convent of Mercy Chapel, Nicholson Street (Contd.)

The chapel is lighted on the south end by a five light window with rich geometrical tracery and at the side by two lights in each bay, ornamented by similar tracery. Ample ventilation is provided from the outside in the shape of quatrefoil openings.

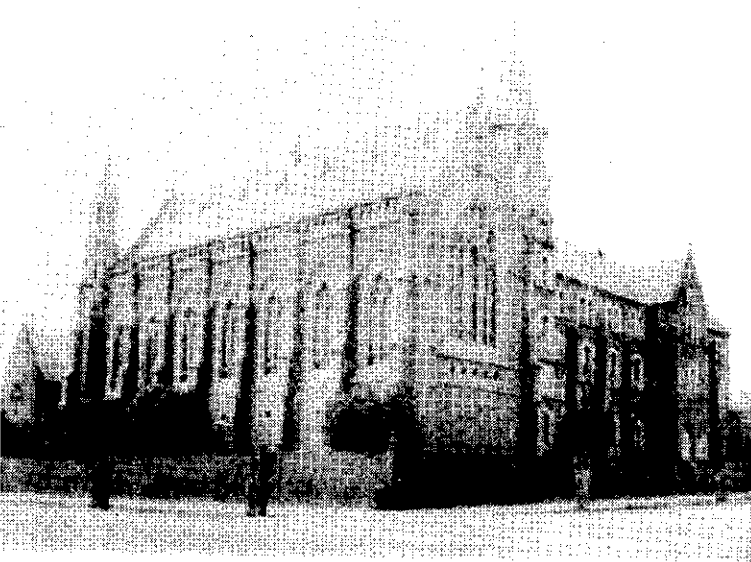
The foundations are of bluestone to the top of the double plinth. The whole of the dressings are of Wauru Ponds stone. The roof is of Welsh Slate, and finished inside with stucco work in imitation of freestone... The style of architecture is of the Thirteenth century geometrical period"³

The building is in an excellent state of preservation and provides a unique example of an intact convent chapel in the geometric French gothic style of architecture. Internally the marble altar, installed in 1898,⁴ is of considerable interest, and is constructed in a decorative gothic style.

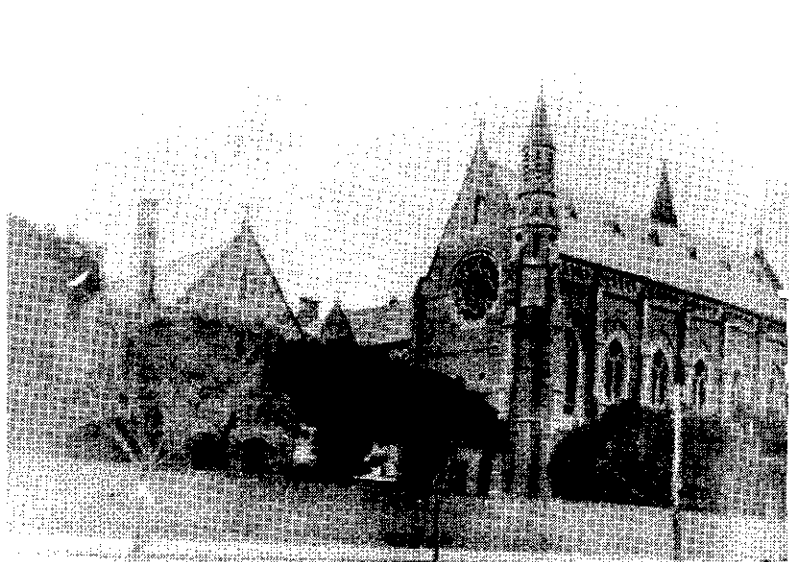
This building is an extremely important streetscape element to Nicholson Street, and is in excellent condition and state of intactness. It forms part of an early convent complex that is unique to Melbourne and paralleled only by Mary's Mount, Ballarat.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that this chapel be added to the Historic Buildings Register as part of the Convent of Mercy complex. It is also recommended for addition to the Register of the National Estate and for specification under Clause 8 of the Town and Country Planning Act (3rd Schedule).



(26) Convent of Mercy (undated)
Chapel



(27) Convent of Mercy (undated)

3. *Australasian Builder & Contractors News* op Cit. p. 1174, plus lithograph of design.

4. *Advocate* 30.4.1898 p. 19

NAME: Convent of Mercy School
Buildings Complex

ADDRESS: Nicholson Street

CONSTRUCTION DATES:

of interest to this study:

1850 - Goold's house and
Kennedy's house constructed.

1858 - new school (extension to Bishop
Goold's Cottage).

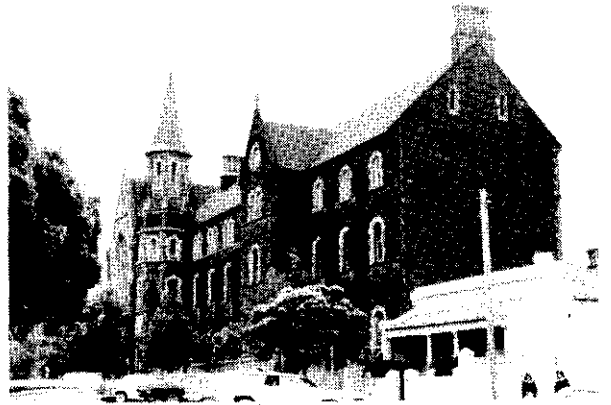
1861 - new bluestone wing

1862 - new two storey wing (extension to
Kennedy's Cottage).

1871 - first section of bluestone buildings

1881 - second section of bluestone buildings

1887 - third section of bluestone buildings
and chapel.



School in Palmer Street (1871-1881)



Dr. Gould's House (1850)



Don Kennedy's four room cottage
(1850)

ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS:

1929-33 front balcony connecting Gould's and Kennedy's cottages

1944 - covered way connecting chapel to school

ARCHITECTS

1850 - Goold's and Kennedy's residences - Newson and Blackburn

1858 - George & Schneider

1869-71 - T.A. Kelly, foundation stone laid 9.12.1869. Opened 24.5.1871
L. Terry architect.

1880-1881 - unknown.

BUILDERS:

Unknown and Hartley and Tye (Bishop Goold's House)

FIRST OWNER:

Catholic Church

FIRST OCC./USE:

Ditto/Convent and School

PRESENT OWNER:

Ditto

PRESENT OCC./USE:

Ditto/Convent and School

CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS:

Primarily bluestone

INTACTNESS/CONDITION:

Substantially intact

AREA/STREETSCAPE:

Part of recommended area A1

IMPORTANCE:

This school complex is extremely important on a state-wide basis. It incorporates some of the earliest suburban residences in Melbourne, including that of Bishop Goold and comprises an excellent collection of early bluestone convent buildings. The 1858 wing, added to the rear of Goold's cottage, was designed by architects George and Schneider and survives substantially intact. The Palmer Street school buildings were designed by Leonard Terry, possibly with design contribution from William Wardell.

The buildings survive substantially intact to this day, apart from the front balcony linking the Nicholson Street frontage of the original residences. The original two residences of 1850 and the following building phases until 1890 provide a unique collection of bluestone religious and educational buildings in Victoria.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that this complex together with the chapel (see separate discussion) be added to the Historic Buildings Register, the Register of the National Estate and be specified under Clause 8 of the Town and Country Planning Board (3rd Schedule).

COMPLEX ANALYSIS AND EVIDENCE:

In 1857 Mother Ursula Frayne, Mother Xavier Dillon and Mother Joseph Sherlock, sisters of Mercy, arrived in Melbourne at the invitation of the then Bishop of Melbourne the Most Rev. Dr. Goold.¹ The Sisters of Mercy were founded in Ireland in 1827 as a charitable and educational order. After arriving in Melbourne from Perth they established a foundation in Nicholson Street, Fitzroy occupying the house which until that time had served as the Bishop's own residence. It was a brick cottage of two storeys and rectangular plan with three rooms on each floor. The longer side faced Nicholson Street and there was an entrance hall incorporating a staircase at the south end, a two storey verandah ran along Nicholson Street facade.

The original date of construction of this house was 1850⁴, and it was designed by architects Newson and Blackburn. In 1853 it was occupied by Edward B. White². Bishop Goold first occupied the house 1854 and at this date, 6 rooms were added³. In 1863 the house was transferred to the convent.

The first mass was said at the convent on April 15, 1857. The sisters took 6 years to pay off a mortgage that was over the property and in 1893 the Titles Office recorded the transfer of the first cottage and land to the convent.

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1. Unless otherwise indicated, all information regarding the development of this complex was obtained from Ko K. and Wu. F "The Convent of Mercy Academy of Mary Immaculate, Nicholson Street Fitzroy." B. Arch, University of Melbourne 1968.
 2. Earliest ratebook entry located for this house was Melbourne City Council Ratebooks, Fitzroy Ward 1853: No. 447 Edward B. White (occupier) Nicholson Street Stone house 8 rooms kitchen and room off cellar, stable and ighouse *300.
 3. Ratebook as above 1854 No. 196 Right Rev'd. Dr. Goold (occupier) Nicholson Street, stone house, 14 rooms, entrance hall, stable, coachhouse and garden *600.
 4. M.C.C. Building Register book: 31.5.1850. No. 171. John Watson (Owner), Hartley and Tye, builders, Newson and Blackburn architects, dwelling house, Collingwood, near the watch house.

Convent of Mercy, Nicholson Street (Cont.)

On the 20th April 1857 a school for young ladies was opened with an attendance of 9 children. On the 9th June 1858 the foundation stone of the new school was laid. This was designed by architects George and Schneider⁴ and was the bluestone extension added to the rear of Goold's original residence. The building was opened on the 30th October 1858 at a cost of £3,000.

In March of 1861 Mr. Don Kennedy's adjoining house was purchased. This house, like Bishop Goold's original residence, was constructed in 1850 to the design of architects Newson and Blackburn. (footnote 5 + 11). In 1861 another wing was added to the rear of Goold's residence. In 1862 an additional two storey school building was erected abutting Kennedy's original house to the south. It was intended to extend this building to the east, as witnessed by the projecting keystones, but this was never done. It was opened on the 24th September 1863 at a cost of £3,300.

In 1865 the land at the corner of Nicholson and Palmer was bought for £3,000. By 1868, 460 girls attended the convent school, and it was necessary to construct additional school buildings.

On the 9th December 1869 the foundation stone of the eastern portion of the existing Palmer Street School was laid. The architect was T.A. Kelly⁶. By May 1871 after delays and change in architect, the 3 storey wing was opened, to the design of Leonard Terry⁷. It was likely that William Wardell had contributed to the design. Wardell was renowned for the fact that, during his period as Inspector General of Public Works with the Public Works Department, he was involved in private practice... "and then to hand it over to such a one and such a one only, as will duly divide with him the architects commission"⁸. He was also known to enjoy the patronage of the Roman Catholic Bishop and clergy.

An early photo of 1880 shows the convent with the first part of the Palmer Street wing complete⁹, it also shows Goold's original house (with striped roof to the double storey verandah) and Kennedy's four room house with the bluestone extension. The land where the existing chapel now stands was owned by the Convent at this stage, but the original house can be seen in the photo.

By 1881 the remaining part of the Palmer Street wing was completed. The change in elevation makes the two phases of construction quite clear: the later 1880 section has paired 3rd floor windows (instead of single) and the buttresses rise only to the beginning of the upper floor.

By 1890 the Palmer Street frontage was completed by the construction of the chapel (see separate discussion).

An early photo shows the complete complex after the wall was built (1926-29) and just after the planting of street trees¹⁰

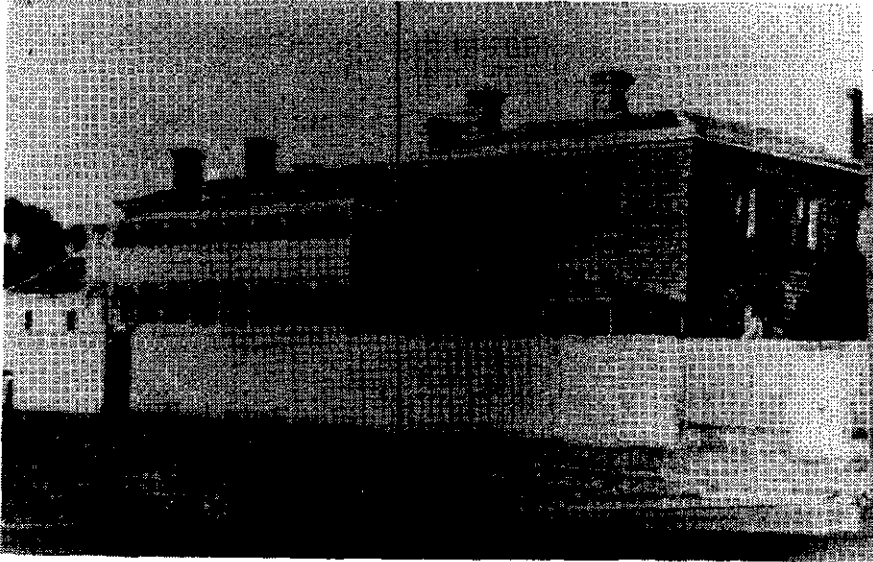
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4. *Argus* 6.4.1858, George & Schneider. Fresh tenders wanted - erection of a new convent Nicholson Street.
 5. Earliest ratebook entry located for this house was Melbourne City Council Ratebooks, Fitzroy Ward 1853: No. 448 Robert Willan (occupier) Nicholson Street, stone house 5 rooms, kitchen and washhouse £250.
 6. *Age* 9.12.1869, laying of foundation stone.
 7. D.I. McDonald "William Wilkinson Wardell - Architect and Engineer" *Victorian Historical Magazine*, Vol. 41 1970 p.334
 8. *Ibid*
 9. La Trobe Collection, State Library of Victoria: H4571 M.C.7, dr 3 Env. 3 "Fitzroy from the Exhibition Building"
 10. La Trobe Collection State Library of Victoria H35318 M.C.10 dr.12
 11. M.C.C. Building Register Book 6.5.1850. No. 185. E.B. Wight dwelling house, Collingwood, near watch house. Hartley and Tye builders Newson and Blackburn architects.

Convent of Mercy, Nicholson Street (Cont.)

In 1929-1933 the buildings along the Nicholson Street frontage were linked by a front balcony, thus altering the appearance of the two original houses. However behind this balcony, the original bluestone facade is still visible (now painted) with the original fenestration and some original joinery.

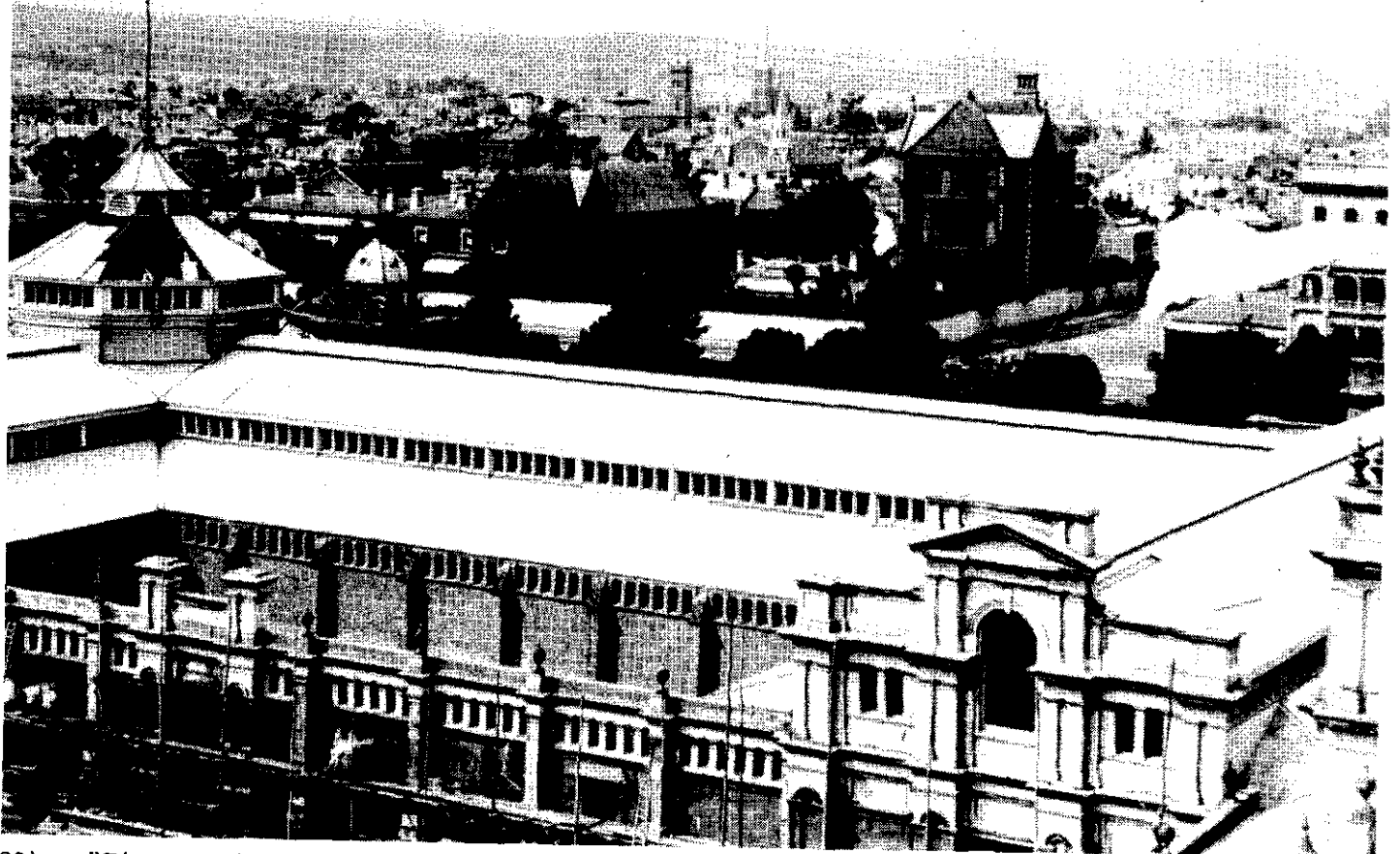
The surviving school buildings (as described above) are of great importance as an early convent development.

The original building (the bishop of Melbourne's residence) of 1850, the adjoining cottage also of this date and the following building phases until 1890 provide a unique collection of bluestone religious and educational buildings in Melbourne and Victoria.



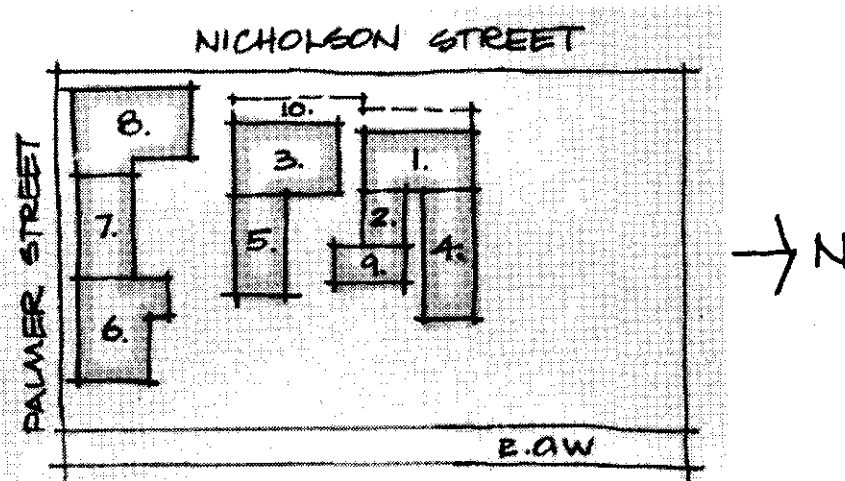
(28)

Bishop Goold's residence (left) and Don Kennedy's residence (right).
Undated: Source Ko, K and Wu, V. Thesis 1968 p.5.



(29) "Fitzroy from the Exhibition Building" 1880.

Convent of Mercy, Nicholson Street (Cont.)



Plan of Convent Buildings*

-not to scale

1. Dr. Goolds Cottage
2. 1858 New Boarding School & Day School
3. Don Kennedy's Four Room Cottage
4. 1861 Wing
5. 1862 Two Storeyed Wing
6. 1871 First Section of Bluestone Classrooms
7. 1881 Second Section of Bluestone Classrooms
8. 1887 Third Section of Bluestone Classrooms
and Memorial Chapel
9. 1891 Twelve Sisters House
10. 1929-33 Front Balcony

*Note: Buildings of relevance to this study
only are shown on this plan.